

### 6 Boardroom vs Battlefield: The 5 Mindset Shifts Elite Leaders Make in a Crisis

### "You can't read your way out of a fire."

When everything hits the fan—markets shift, revenue slips, teams fracture, and leadership is tested—**strategy alone isn't enough.** 

The real differentiator? Mindset under pressure.

Over 25 years in retained executive search, I've watched elite leaders navigate chaos with precision while others unravel.

This isn't about clichés or empty slogans.

This is the **real operating system** of top-tier performers when the pressure is on.

## 💢 1. Default to Decision: Clarity Beats Consensus

#### The battlefield doesn't wait. Neither does the boardroom.

Average leaders overanalyze. They crowdsource. They hesitate.

Elite leaders? They move. Fast, clean, and with conviction.

They know **imperfect action** is almost always better than standing still.

- In crisis, speed becomes a competitive advantage.
- Reframe: "I'll act and adapt" > "I'll wait and see"

#### **Key Tactic:**

Create a 24-hour window for every major decision. No more. Get the intel you need, trust your gut, and pull the trigger.



#### 2. Control the Room Without Controlling the People

Crisis reveals leadership.

Not in shouting, posturing, or forced authority—

—but in calm energy and precision presence.

Elite leaders own the emotional tone of the room.

They speak less, listen more, and move from a place of internal certainty, not external chaos.

"Command, don't demand."

#### **Key Tactic:**

Drop into low, deliberate speech. Set the room with posture, not PowerPoint. Ask one powerful question and let silence do its job.



#### 🗩 3. Operate from What Is, Not What Should Be

In high-pressure moments, most people default to wishful thinking.

"They should be stepping up."

"We shouldn't be in this mess."

"We can't afford to lose them."

That's all noise.

Elite leaders look at the board—exactly as it is—and make their next move without judgment or denial.

other truth is not a threat. It's your most valuable asset.

#### **Key Tactic:**

Build a 2-column battle plan:

- Column A: "What is" (cold, brutal facts)
- Column B: "What we control" (next moves)

Operate only from Column B.

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## 94. Make the First Cut: Be the Scalpel, Not the Scab

Strong leadership means making the hard call before the pain spreads.

The best leaders cut early—headcount, budgets, strategy, partners—because they understand the longer you wait, the worse it gets.

"The cost of delay is rarely worth the comfort of avoidance."

And once they cut, they **communicate** with brutal clarity. No sugarcoating. No confusion.

#### **Key Tactic:**

Use this 3-part script:

- 1. "Here's what we're doing."
- 2. "Here's why."
- 3. "Here's how we move forward."

Then... shut up and lead.

# **§** 5. Protect Energy Like Capital

Top-tier leaders know energy is not infinite.

#### Their stamina is a strategic asset.

They guard their calendar, their inputs, and their emotions the way others guard cash flow.

They avoid drama. They don't overtalk. They create space between stimulus and response.

Your **nervous system** is your leadership edge. Train it.

# **Key Tactic:**

Build a 3-part recovery protocol you treat like a meeting:

- 30 mins daily: no-phone walk or reset
- 1x/week: deep decompression (massage, nature, sauna, etc.)
- 1x/quarter: 72-hour off-grid reset

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# Final Thought:

## The pressure you feel is the privilege of leadership.

But it doesn't have to break you.

The battlefield and the boardroom both reward the same things:

Decisiveness. Presence. Reality. Precision. Energy.

You don't rise to the level of your goals—you fall to the level of your systems.

If you're navigating a storm and need help building or rebuilding, reply back or shoot me a message.

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